Tattoo You

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Tattoo You

by slashyrogue

Summary

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"Excuse me," the beautiful blue-eyed angel said, his voice shaking, "I'd like to talk to someone about getting a tattoo."

Nigel had to blink then, the cigarette in his mouth half hanging and nearly falling out before he smashed it into the nearest ashtray. "That would be me, Darling."

The angel looked Nigel over, as if he were assessing him, and frowned.

"No one else works here?"

Nigel smiled. "I usually have someone at the front here but he's out getting us lunch. We're a bit short staffed I'm afraid. You can go to 'This Is My Design' on fifth but I think they may be closed today."

The angel blushed, biting his lip, and then shook his head. "No, no, I…I'd really like to talk about this today. I've scheduled my day around it so…" he eyed Nigel's tattoo sleeve, "Did you do those yourself?"

"Some of them."

"Hmm," he said, staring still, "Then I think I can talk to you, Mister…."

Nigel held out his hand and the angel took it, shaking lightly.

"Nigel," he said, licking his lips, "You can call me Nigel."

The angel looked up at him then. "Nigel," he repeated, eyeing Nigel's other obvious tats, "My name is Adam Raki."

"Adam," he said, "Nice to meet you, Darling. Let's talk in my office, yeah?"

"Ok."

Nigel could feel Adam's eyes on him as he walked into the office and sat down, watching him stare around the room before he sat down looking still so out of place he felt like one wrong word would make him disappear.

"So…why did you choose us, then? There's a few shops---"

"Gemini Tattoos," Adam said, his voice shaking, "It….I like space."

He sighed. "It's not….that's not why I named the place Gemini, really."

Adam frowned. "Oh. Why did you?"

He felt his chest tighten as he shook his head. "It's….complicated."

Nigel tried not to think about picking out the name in bed as a teen in a quiet, dark room, whispered voices talking about the future that was soon crushed in a few months time.

He didn't like thinking about it at all, which was probably a bad idea, but when was he not the fucking king of bad ideas?

"I'm sorry, Darling, if---"

"My father died six months ago," Adam said, still not meeting Nigel's eyes, "I….I miss him a lot."

He frowned, jarred out of his bad thoughts by the change of topic. "Um….I'm sorry, Darling. I'm sure that's hard."

Adam pulled out a phone and scrolled showing Nigel pictures of a night sky with a traced dots that formed a bear. "It's Ursa Major," Adam said, his voice shaking, "It…it was Dad's favorite. I….I'd like the color too, maybe some outlines on the edge of purple or…" tears filled his eyes as he looked away and Nigel opened his desk drawer grateful he kept a tiny packet of tissues there.

"Here you are," he said, holding them out.

The surprised look on Adam's face made him unsure if he'd take the tissue but he did, dabbing his eyes. "T…hank you, Nigel."

"You're welcome," he said, setting the tiny pack down, "I….I can do it, if….can I see the picture again?"

"Yes."

"Just let me---"

Nigel took out his sketchbook and began to draw, trying to make it just right, and he didn't have the color but he shaded it in. "Like this?"

"No."

His jaw clenched. "What's wrong with it?"

"I….I just don't like it."

So, he tried again.

And again.

And again.

"Darling, if you're still unsure…."

“Maybe….I want….his initials? ATR? Andrew Timothy Raki. I….I just want it to be about him, but not….”

Nigel tried again, and again Adam didn’t like it.

He ended up spending three hours on his sketches, most of the time Adam rejecting each, and when he finally got it right by including his father’s name as stars in the bottom left corner his annoyance deflated.

“Thank you, Nigel, I really---”

Nigel got up, loathe to let him go. “Thirsty, Adam? I’ve got—"

Adam stood up and shook his head. “No, I need to get home thank you Nigel. Next week we can start?”

“Absolutely. Just pick a day.”

“I’m off on Mondays.”

Nigel smiled. “Monday it is.”

The first tattoo took nearly five Mondays.

Five perfect fucking Mondays.

Every Monday he looked forward to work and ignored Aiden who would grin at his restlessness.

“He’s always on time, Nigel. Just go get ready.”

“I know he’s always on time, and I’m already—"

Nigel couldn’t hold back his grin when Adam came in and helped him hang up his jacket before he offered water and fucking muffins because Adam loved muffins. He always ate five during his few hours, and Nigel listened to him talk about space and stars and just fell more and more in love with him.

Adam was nothing like the people Nigel usually went for.

And yet as he finished up his last session he thought maybe—

“I like the tattoos on your arm, Nigel.”

The compliment made him oddly blush. “Thank you, Darling. I—"

Adam reached over as Nigel cleaned him off to touch Nigel’s arm. He had half a sleeve on his left arm, mixed with quite a lot he’d added for no reason at all other than because they seemed “cool” when he was an idiot teenager with nothing to lose. There were others, one on

his back, and another on the side of his neck, but while the sleeve was still a mess he'd tried to make it look better if only for the shop.

Though one of them was fairly new in the last several years.

"I like the star a lot. Why did you tattoo that?"

He pulled his arm back as he stood as his jaw tightened. "For my wife."

Adam didn't respond, and Nigel suddenly remembered how badly he'd fucked up with Gabi.

"I'll meet you up front."

He saw Aiden frown at him. "Don't."

"Nigel—"

Nigel rang Adam up and didn't look at him. "That'll be…"

Adam dropped exact change. "Thank you. I…I really like it."

Nigel sighed. "I'm glad, Darling. If you ever…"

"Goodbye Nigel."

He looked up as Adam all but ran out the door and covered his face with his hands.

"That was pathetic."

He threw up his middle finger at Aiden. "He clearly is into you. The way he looked at you the last few weeks…"

Nigel sighed. "Fuck off and close up, alright?"

"Nigel, come on! You can't just…"

He went upstairs to his place above the shop, thankful for the reprieve, and got shit faced all night. And pretty much every other night thereafter. The worst was when Adam left a glowing review, talking about how nice he was, and added a picture of his starry arm. Nigel saved it to his phone, missing their Mondays, and could barely function for a month after.

Then, the tattoo convention came, and he threw himself into work. The convention was a huge deal for a little shop like his, and he planned on going all four days. He and Aiden set up his booth, which happened to be right near "This Is My Design" the shop he'd only gone to once to check out the competition and met its owner, Will.

"Hey Nigel. Thought I might see you here."

Nigel shook Will's hand. "You all four days too?"

“Not this time. I have a session tomorrow I can’t miss. The poor guy keeps showing up and he’s really sweet. Though the last time he was a bit drunk, I think? I’ve done two on him already. All space stuff.”

Nigel froze. “Space?”

Will nodded. “Yeah, he told me he loves stars and planets and his dad—"

Nigel didn’t hear anything after that, jaw tight as he set up his prices.

So, Adam went to Will now, huh? He must not have liked Nigel’s work all that much.

“…and he was married! The poor guy I think got the wrong idea. I invited him to maybe stop by but he’s not big into crowds.”

Nigel blinked. “Who was married?”

Will frowned. “The tatt—" his eyes widened, “Wait. You KNOW him. Nigel…”

Nigel fell onto his chair. “Adam?”

Will laughed. “Christ, it was YOU? He said he got a tattoo from someone he liked and found out he was married. If I’d known it was you I would’ve just…"

“I swear, Will, if you’re fucking with me-"

Will pulled out his phone, rolling up his shirt sleeves, and Nigel couldn’t help but notice his arms. They were completely covered in very detailed sleeves that were all dark shit: blood, gore, and should’ve scared Adam to death.

He stared at the pictures Will had of Adam’s arms, even one of him specifically, and his chest tightened. “Yeah, that’s….that’s Adam.”

Will turned the phone and started tapping. “I’ll call him.”

“What? No! He’d hate it here! You said…”

Will ignored him, putting the phone to his ear, and he heard, “You should stop by! I can give you a freebie?”

He felt his heart start beating wildly in his chest when Will gave him a thumbs up, still talking, and could hardly breathe.

Nigel couldn’t move and just stared at Will until suddenly Aiden returned from fuck knows where.

“Nigel!”

He jumped. “Jesus Chris! Why are you yelling?”

“Why aren’t you answering? We have customers!”

Nigel turned to see people lined up and then looked at Will who said, “Yeah, I think even if I’m busy the guy next to me would work on you.”

Nigel bit his lip and got up to look at the crowd. “We’re closed!”

“NIGEL!”

He turned to Aiden. “Adam is coming, and…I’m not gonna let him go again.”

Aiden’s face lit up. “Are you serious?”

“As a fucking heart attack.”

Aiden laughed and patted his shoulder hard as he ran up. “I CAN TAKE YOU! WE’RE NOT CLOSED!”

Nigel sat in his chair, eyeing that crowd, and waited with bated breath. He might fuck this up before it even started but he was gonna try. Nigel sat there staring at every stranger that came into their lines for what felt like forever until he saw him. Adam was standing off to the side and staring at Nigel. Nigel stood up and then suddenly—Adam ran.

So, he did too.

Nigel pushed through the crowd and yelled out, “ADAM!” who kept on running. He chased him across the convention but soon lost him in the crowd. “Fuck!”

Nigel dragged himself back to the booth and both Will and Aiden looked up. “Shit. Nig—"

He glared at both of them and walked up to take a customer. Nigel didn’t talk to anyone but customers the rest of the day and helped clean up but ignored Aiden’s attempts at talking to him. He was glad Aiden didn’t show up back up again when he left back to the shop where he lived upstairs, and got drunk as hell only to miss his alarms the next morning.

So, he didn’t go. Nigel knew Aiden would be pissed off, but couldn’t bring himself to leave, and just sat in bed all day. Mostly staring at Adam’s review for Will’s shop complete with pictures. He ached seeing them, fingers aching to touch, and saved every last pic to his phone. It was pathetic, he knew, but he couldn’t help himself.

Aiden showed up after dinner, yelling, “YOU BETTER BE SICK OR DEAD UP THERE!” and walked in to just stare at him sadly, “Nigel.”

He showed him his phone. “Look.” Aiden sighed.

“I’ve seen them already.”

Nigel looked again with a sigh. “He hates me.”

“He thinks you’re married, Nigel. If you only told him when he was here how madly in love you are…."

“Shut up.”

“You do know we have his phone number and ID.”

“I’m not…I won’t do that to him.”

Aiden sighed, “Fine. You better show up tomorrow.”

“I will.”

“Don’t get drunk again.”

“Whatever you say, Aidddddeeeennnn.” Nigel didn’t get drunk again. It felt like an easy out, and he’d much rather wallow. He fell asleep at two am but woke up on time to see Will’s booth closed.

“Oh.”

Adam’s session.

Would he even show up? “Earth to Nigel!”

Nigel sighed as they set up, and the day went by smoothly enough before he took lunch. He headed for the food court and got a burger with fries that he ate fairly fast before he headed back. He didn’t look over when he saw Aiden had someone on his chair.

He couldn’t help thinking about Adam’s face when he’d run out yesterday, the pain, and he knew it would be so much fucking easier to just go find him but for what?

So that he could fuck up again?

“Nig---” he heard, but was grateful when someone came up to the booth he could drown out any talk to that wasn’t business.

Nigel knew business.

He was fucking *good* at his work.

It was everything else he fucked up.

The next client just wanted a generic heart with “Lucas” in the middle of it on his upper left arm, and gave Nigel a fifty dollar tip when he walked off which was better than he’d had the whole convention.

He barely felt like a person for the rest of the day, and when they were packing up any talk Aiden tried was ignored though at one point, he saw him staring oddly across the venue which prompted Nigel to do the same.

“Isn’t that one of Will’s people?”

Aiden blushed, tossing the table into Nigel’s truck, and shook his head. “I don’t know, is it?”

Nigel looked at the man again, whose eyepatch seemed too strange not to be the man he'd seen working at "This Is My Design" the few times he'd gone by.

Hmm.

Maybe Aiden had a secret of his very own.

They were barely able to fit their stuff between Nigel's truck and Aiden's sedan but they managed, and when they got back to "Gemini" it was all stored away for next convention.

"So…."

"I'll see you Monday."

Aiden sighed. "Nigel…"

"I don't want to talk about it, Aiden, alright?"

The silence he got before he watched Aiden leave was welcome, and Nigel locked up before he headed into the main area to go upstairs.

Though he paused halfway because there was a blinking message on the answering machine.

He thought about ignoring it but knew if it was a cancellation he'd have to write it down, so he pressed play.

"Um, this is….you're probably not there," he heard, his heart skipping a beat at Adam's voice, "I….I just wanted to apologize. I should not have run away. I…I'm very sorry."

The quick cut off made him slam his hand into the wall, a dent forming, and he cursed.

"*Fuck*."

That was it then.

He could call Adam, tell him he wasn't married, but what if that wasn't why this was happening?

What if Will was wrong?

Nigel went upstairs, feeling worse than ever, and while he wanted to get drunk again, he resisted. Gabi had always killed him a mean drunk, a bitter one, and even if he wasn't gonna get to have Adam he didn't want to keep doing this.

So, he did something stupid.

He called his brother and hung up.

No.

That was a bad fucking idea, and he knew it.

His monthly dinners at his brother's place aside, they weren't like that anymore and hadn't been for a long time.

Nigel turned off his phone and proceeded to drown out his sorrows with loud fucking music and idiotic action flicks. He didn't even listen to the words, knowing most of them by now, and to say it helped would be laughable but it didn't hurt.

He fell asleep after midnight and woke to Aiden shaking him.

Nigel blinked up at him. "What time is it?"

"Eight."

He sighed as he sat up. "Mmm," he said, rubbing his eyes, "How many today?"

"Just two," Aiden said, "That one cheerleader with the tramp stamp and more work on Tonny's back."

Nigel smiled. "You can have the second one. He's a chatterbox."

Aiden flipped him off. "Get dressed. Tonny is at one and Lucy is coming in at noon. We've got at least two hours of potential walk ins to deal with."

Nigel got dressed then, barely paying much attention to what he put on, and he brushed his teeth to meet Aiden downstairs who had muffins and a box of coffee. He frowned. "Who are we trying to impress? The Queen?"

Aiden looked at him oddly. "I…um….no?"

"So why all this?"

He blushed. "You never know who could come in?"

Nigel's eyes narrowed. "Like *who*?"

"No one!"

He walked across the shop and found Aiden's phone plugged in the front.

"NIGEL!"

"Who's coming? Is it my brother? Cuz I thought you were over that?"

"NO! I don't---"

He tried to get in and finally tossed the phone at Aiden with a growl. "Fine. Who cares?"

Aiden sighed. "You used to," he mumbled, "A lot."

Nigel didn't answer him.

He was right.

Obviously.

But that didn't mean he did now.

They opened the doors at nine thirty, so much earlier than most in the area, and Nigel ate three muffins before there was even a whiff of a client.

A lot of the people who stopped by just came for the *thought* of a tattoo, sometimes just looking at the wall of designs there, and they'd leave with, "Maybe I'll come back!" but never did.

That's what the first two were, the look and see types, and when Nigel left to take a piss he came back to find Aiden looking at him expectantly.

"What?"

"There's a consult in your office."

Nigel frowned. "You couldn't do it?"

Aiden shrugged, but he also was blushing, and just turned away. "He wants you."

He sighed.

"Fine."

Nigel walked to the office and threw open the door only to freeze.

"Adam."

Adam sat right where he'd been just two months prior, his eyes red and cheeks flushed. "I….hello."

Nigel didn't quite know what to do, or say, but he forced himself to walk into the room and shut the door.

"I….um….what's…."

He put a piece of paper down and Nigel frowned at it.

It was a spotted brown dog in a space suit.

"I….I'd like a tattoo of this," he said, as Nigel stared, "I….um…."

Nigel sat down, taking the paper, and frowned as he looked up. "Who drew this?"

Adam swallowed. "Will did."

Nigel's jaw tightened. "So why isn't he doing it?"

Adam's lip quivered. "W….I spoke to Will last night," he said, his voice shaking, "He…he told me you're not married and….might have feelings for me."

Nigel let the paper fall from his fingers. "He did?"

He nodded. "Yes. I…." Adam reached out to take the paper and looked at it, smiling as tears filled his eyes, "I always wanted a dog, Nigel," he said, his voice tight, "But I….I've never been comfortable with them. They're very loud, and they need constant….attention. I've never lived with anyone in my house other than my father or….or cared about anyone other than my father."

Tears filled Nigel's eyes. "Adam---"

"I miss Mondays," Adam said, a tear falling down his cheek as he looked up, "I miss Mondays and I….I want the dog to remind me that…that I can have things I like but it's ok if I'm not comfortable keeping them."

Nigel shook his head. "Darling, I don't know what you---"

He grabbed Nigel's hand, still trembling, and squeezed. "I don't want a dog but I….I want…"

Nigel let out a long breath.

"Can I tattoo you, Darling? Your Space Dog?"

Adam frowned. "I….yes."

He let go of Adam's and stood up, heart pounding in his chest. "Follow me."

They walked out and he saw the shop was empty.

"Nigel?"

Nigel walked up to the front where he found a note where Aiden always plugged in his phone.

Don't fuck this up.

-A

He crumbled the note and tossed it in the trash as he let out a long breath.

"Get in the chair, Adam."

"Um, ok?"

Nigel readied everything he needed before he turned to look at Adam in his chair, arm out waiting while the other hung over the other side. He could see a bit of the tattoo he'd given him peek out from the short sleeve blue button up Adam wore and ached to touch it.

"Nigel?"

Nigel went to print out the stencil and set it up before he began. Adam didn't move once, not even a whimper, and it hurt to think he'd become used to this after being with Will so many times.

He paused when he finished the tiny dog outline and looked at Adam.

"I'm not married."

Adam blinked. "I….I know."

"I…..I was," he said, his voice shaking, "Once. I….I wasn't good to her, Darling. I wasn't….I wasn't good at all."

Adam frowned. "You got divorced?"

"Yeah," Nigel said, setting the gun back, "About three years ago."

"Oh."

"I….I got the star for her," he said, almost growling, "She *was* my north star. My….she was *everything* and I didn't give her room to breathe," he laughed as tears filled his eyes, "What's worse is she didn't even like it. She told me it made no sense because she didn't even like space or….anything."

"*I* like space."

Nigel looked up and smiled, his hand coming to Adam's belly feeling him tremble as he lifted up his shirt slightly to see the planets Will had tattooed for him there. "I know you do, Darling. Maybe…." He felt a tear fall down his cheek, "Maybe…you're my Star."

Adam smiled. "Nigel…"

"Adam I…."

He pulled on Nigel's shirt, surprising him, and Nigel fell forward onto Adam who sighed happily into a kiss. It was everything Nigel would've wanted it to be, so soft and yet claiming him in ways no one ever had. They pulled back and Nigel fought for breath, chest heaving as Adam touched his face with tears of his own lingering on his cheeks.

"Star, I know you might want to take things a bit—"

"I'd very much like to have sex with you today," Adam blurted out, "But if you want to wait I under—"

Nigel didn't let him finish. They were on each other in seconds, smashed uncomfortably into the chair, and Nigel pulled back to say, "I've gotta….your arm."

Adam frowned. "Oh."

"We can finish, if you…."

Adam shook his head. “I don’t want to finish today, Nigel. Please?”

He nodded and reluctantly got up, wiping off Adam’s ‘Spacedog’ and covering it in a bandage before he helped Adam up off the chair.

They kissed again, harder this time, and almost tripped going backwards up the stairs but laughed, grabbing Adam’s hand as they ran together. He reached for Adam’s shirt the minute they got upstairs, kissing again deeply, and soon they were half dressed before they’d even made it across the kitchen, barely dressed at all when they got upstairs to his bed.

He kissed every inch of Adam, reveling in his moans as he spoke, and Adam told him all about his new tattoos while he kept on kissing him just because he knew he could.

“…and the last one was the most difficult because I got it on my…”

Nigel’s cell phone rang, cutting through their quiet, and Nigel groaned.

“Ignore it, Star.”

“Who is it?”

“My brother,” he mumbled, pulling Adam closer as he kissed his neck, “Probably to ask me to come for dinner.”

Adam frowned. “You don’t like him?”

Nigel shook his head and hugged Adam tight before Adam sat up, wearing nothing but a pair of blue boxer briefs so thin Nigel could feel his cock hard against his own. “It’s complicated, Star. Now, where is this difficult tattoo? Your foot?”

Adam shook his head and h.

“Your back? Back tattoos…"

“It’s on my…,” Adam took Nigel’s hand, guiding it to his left ass cheek, “Here.”

Nigel let out a long breath. “Will’s seen your ass?”

“Yes, because that’s where it is. Nigel…"

Nigel’s cock twitched as he found he could hardly breathe.

“Adam, darling, can I—" Adam nodded, climbing off him to lay on his back, and Nigel all but groaned as he peeled off Adam’s boxers revealing a tattoo he did not expect. It was a raccoon smoking a cigarette. “Adam.”

“Yes, it’s…I wanted to get one to remind me of you even if I couldn’t see it."

Nigel smiled, running his hand over the silly thing, and Adam moaned.

“This is…Adam I…Star, I…I might just be a bit in love with you, you know?” Adam turned over again, eyes wide.

“Nigel…” He touched his cheek.

“You don’t have to say a damn thing. Just…stay?”

Adam nodded, blinking back tears, and let Nigel finish getting him naked before Nigel did the same. He then began to kiss every one of Adam’s tattoos, even over the gauze of the one he’d done today, and soon the kisses were his and he was fingering Adam before he rode him, cheeks flushed and tears still stinging his eyes.

Nigel whispered, “I do, Star, fuck, I love you,” as Adam came with a cry and kissed him with tears on his face, reaching for Nigel as he simply said, “I love you too,” before Nigel came in a rush, nose buried in Adam’s neck as he rode out his pleasure.

They lay there after, just basking, and Nigel could barely stop touching him. “Adam.”

“Yes?”

“I…"

The sound of his alarm system made Nigel freeze, though it went off a second later and he groaned.

“Nigel?”

“Stay here.”

“What’s—"

He kissed Adam quick. “We’ve got company.”

Adam frowned. “Who?”

Nigel sighed. “I’m fairly certain it’s my—"

He heard footsteps coming closer, too late to cut him off before he saw Adam, and just kissed Adam’s cheek. “It’s my brother.”

“Your—" Nigel looked at the door and saw his twin looking angry.

“I see you’ve had a recent development we should discuss over our next dinner, Nigel. I apologize but you always answer your phone, so I was concerned.”

Adam blinked. “You’re twins?”

Nigel hugged Adam. “Fuck off, Brolis, yeah? I’m alive and obviously busy."

Hannibal didn’t move. “He will, of course, come to dinner.”

“Ha—"

“Thank you, I’d like that,” Adam said, making Nigel sigh as Hannibal smiled, “Tomorrow?”

Nigel glared at him when Adam said, “I’m off on Mondays, can we do it then?”

Hannibal nodded. “That sounds just fine. I’d introduce myself but I think perhaps it’s not—"

“Adam Raki,” Adam said, “And you…"

“Dr. Hannibal Lecter. It’s very nice to meet an acquaintance of my brother’s with manners. Have a good evening.”

And then he was gone. Nigel hugged Adam tightly. “We don’t have to go.”

“But…I want to. He seems very nice, Nigel. I’m not sure why you dislike him.”

Nigel sighed. “I suppose you’ll find out, Star. But with my luck you’ll probably love him.”

Adam lifted his head. “I love you, Nigel, and don’t even find your brother all that attractive. Don’t worry.”

Nigel scoffed. “He looks just like me, Star. Should I be offended?”

Adam smiled. “You look similar but…you’re much more handsome.”

Nigel kissed him again, pinning Adam beneath him.

“Adam….”

“Nigel, I…I’m getting very excited. Can we—?”

He didn’t have to finish the sentence as soon Nigel was kissing down his chest, and the rest of the night - including the next day because Nigel refused to go to the convention despite Aiden’s death threats- had them in bed.

Nigel didn’t expect the phone call they got that Sunday night from Will, who teased that he deserved something for bringing them together. He looked at Adam watching his star program in just boxers, and grinned.

“How about dinner tomorrow at my brother’s place? I’m sure he’d love to have you.”

Will laughed. “Not exactly what I had in mind. I wouldn’t—"

Adam turned around to frown at him. “Nigel…”

“I’m sure he would LOVE to have you tagalong, Will. You’re sure to get along great.”

Little did he know just how right he was.

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